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C O N F I D E N T I A L KABUL 000459

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [AF](#) [IN](#)

SUBJECT: INDONESIAN AMBASSADOR ENVISIONS INCREASED ROLE IN
AFGHANISTAN

REF: JAKARTA 102

Classified By: D/Amb Francis Ricciardone for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[¶1.](#) (C) Summary: Indonesia can play a more significant role in Afghanistan, especially in negotiating with the Taliban, Indonesian Ambassador Erman Hidayat told Deputy Ambassador Ricciardone on January 28. Hidayat said he hoped that Indonesia's religious leaders could play a part in bringing Taliban to the negotiating table. Hidayat was also receptive to Ambassador Ricciardone's suggestion that Indonesia could get involved in police training, even if Indonesia is are reluctant to commit troops here. End Summary

[¶2.](#) (C) Hidayat stressed that his president had talked about reintegration with President Obama and that Indonesia was ready to help in this effort and understands the unique strengths it brings as the world's largest Muslim country. Hidayat said Indonesia intended to increase its commitment to Afghanistan following the London conference that was taking place that day. Ricciardone explained that our international partners are training Afghan National Police and suggested this could be a way for Indonesia to increase its support for Afghanistan. A strong police force is essential in order to transfer the security lead to the Afghan government. Hidayat made us no commitment, but undertook to explore, during his upcoming consultations in Jakarta, whether Indonesia could participate in police training activities.

[¶3.](#) (C) In the short term, Hidayat saw an opportunity for senior Indonesian mullahs again to get involved in mediation between GIROA and the Taliban leadership. When a large group of South Koreans were kidnapped in 2007 in Afghanistan, he revealed, Indonesia had played a supporting role in negotiating for their release, because the Taliban felt comfortable with Indonesia due to their respect for Indonesia's Muslim leaders and connections to them. Hashim Muzadi, leader of the Nahdatul Ulama, and Din Syamsuddin, leader of the Muammadiyah organization, are two men Hidayat suggested could publicly call on the Taliban to stop their insurgency. These would be good men to do so, and the time was right, he said. Ricciardone proposed that it could also be beneficial to bring senior religious leaders from Indonesia to Afghanistan for public diplomacy purposes, and Hidayat agreed that was a good idea.

[¶4.](#) (C) Hidayat, who said he has never been to the United States and spoke heavily accented English, retired as a Brigadier General from the Indonesian army and is serving in his first ambassadorship in Kabul. He has served in Kabul since 2006. He was previously Consul General in Penang, Malaysia and was educated at military academies in Indonesia and South Korea. He speaks fair but heavily accented English.
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